

got ourselves locked into including the NAFTA agreement.

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to say that this week we will be introducing the NAFTA Accountability Act. My colleagues and I will be on the floor talking about its various provisions. We are going to listen to what the public is telling us. Once we restore the economic health of the country it will be easier to restore the governance of the Nation.

NAFTA DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. ANDREWS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, it appears certain that tomorrow a substantial portion of the Federal Government will shut down. That is a very serious and very negative and very real thing for hundreds of thousands of people who work for the Federal Government in this country. I regret that.

I would urge my colleagues to work together tonight and for the rest of this week as long as it takes to prevent that. There is no good reason why these good people have to be put at risk tomorrow.

I want to come back to something that my friend from Ohio just talked about a few minutes ago. That is there have been lots of other shutdowns in America in the last few years as well that have nothing to do, directly at least, with the Federal payroll but have a lot to do with the shutdown of economic growth and opportunity. Yes; it is true and it is regrettable that hundreds of thousands of Federal employees will not go to work and will not get paid tomorrow and will not be able to pay their bills.

A lot of other Americans will not go to work tomorrow, too; the ones who worked in manufacturing jobs and made \$10 or \$12 or \$15 an hour and saw their job go to Mexico or Malaysia. A lot of other Americans will go to work tomorrow in jobs that pay them 40 or 50 percent of what they need to make to meet their family budget. The man or the woman who was working in mid-management at a bank and making \$40,000 or \$45,000 a year a few years ago who now is making \$20,000 or \$25,000 a year.

A lot of young Americans will go to work tomorrow at the shopping mall at their part-time job, even though they have a master's degree or a college degree in a field that ought to get them a job at a much higher rate of wages. A lot of senior citizens tomorrow are going to wake up and wonder if they are going to be able to turn their heater above 65 degrees because they are so worried they cannot pay their utility bill.

The rest of America, Mr. Speaker, sort of shut down a while ago. A lot of American families have seen their budgets shut down and be ratcheted down. So maybe it is time that we had

this confrontation here to talk about our Federal budget and its impact on the family budget.

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I agree, as a Democrat, with my friends, Mr. Speaker, across the aisle who say that we ought to balance the budget and do it in 7 years, and I agree with them that it ought to be done without increasing the tax burden on the American people. They are already overtaxed as far as I am concerned. I do not agree with the exact way that our Republican friends have chosen to do this.

I think that we should be getting rid of accounts that pay for overseas advertising by food companies, not getting rid of remedial reading teachers in the public schools. I think that we can go to some of our agribusinesses in this country that receive welfare checks not to grow food and cut them off instead of raising the cost of going to college for middle-class families. I think that a lot of the tax loopholes and giveaways in the Internal Revenue Code to insurance companies, and banks, and Fortune 500 companies could go by the wayside so we would not have to be raising Medicare premiums on the elderly in this country.

Mr. Speaker, I think we can do it differently, but I agree we have to do it. We have to balance the budget, and we ought to do it in 7 years, and we ought to get to work instead of standing around here tonight just talking to each other about it.

But we ought to do some other things as well. We ought to fix and change our educational system in this country so having a high school diploma means something again, so people are able to graduate from high school and get a job in a noncollege situation, so that people who choose to be a bricklayer, or computer technician, or a cosmetologist, or an electronics worker, can go to school, get a high quality education, get into the job market. We ought to fix our trade policy so that Americans can compete and sell our products in other countries as well as other countries can sell their products here. We should get rid of some of the foolish and pointless regulations that we have imposed on our businesses that do not clean the water, or protect our workplaces, or clean the air, but simply raise the cost of doing business.

Mr. Speaker, it is essential, but not sufficient, to balance the budget in 7 years, but by all means, Mr. Speaker, it is essential for us to get to work, and I hope that what we do in the next couple of days is put aside the posturing over the 1996 election and get to the serious business of worrying about the real problems of real Americans out there tonight, Mr. Speaker, who are afraid they cannot pay their bills, who are watching their incomes shrink, and their taxes rise, and their children's hopes evaporate.

America is in a real and deep economic crisis. For us to fiddle as family

finances burn, for us to talk about who is going to get elected in 1996 rather than who is going to be able to pay their bills in the next 6 days or 6 months is really a disservice to this country.

Let us get to work, Mr. Speaker, and do the job the people sent us here to do.

HOW TO BALANCE THE BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BARR of Georgia). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana [Mr. ROEMER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ROEMER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk just briefly about where we are tonight at 10 minutes of 8 o'clock to my constituents back in Indiana, roughly 4 hours and 10 minutes before the Government might shut down, which is a very, very serious consideration and a serious subject for people throughout this country.

I think, Mr. Speaker, quite frankly that it should not have come to this. It should not come to a situation where we are messing around with the credit rating and the ability of the Secretary of the Treasury, and the U.S. Government, and the President, and Members of the Republican Party and the Democratic Party, to negatively affect our ability to pay on our debt. I think the American people at this time, 4 hours from now, talking about the Government shutting down, are saying to one another they do not want us to act like Republicans and Democrats, and pointing our fingers, talking about gridlock, and partisan games, and even deadlock as we reach this midnight bewitching hour, but what are we doing for the best interests of America? What kinds of considerations are we making for the hard-working people of this country that want to balance the budget, that do not want to see their taxes go up, but want a fair outcome when we balance the budget, that want to make sure that the budget is not balanced on the backs of senior citizens that barely make it month to month on their Medicare or their Social Security, senior citizens that I listen to and work with in my district all the time who tell me, not only do they barely make it by the dime or the quarter, but these senior citizens are the people that, when they get a gift, somebody gives them a present, a birthday present, an anniversary present, they usually keep that wrapping paper and reuse it, or, if they are going to buy something from the supermarket, oftentimes the seniors in northern Indiana will go to three and four different places to find the best bargain, sometimes eating up, maybe, in gas money what they may have saved looking for the best bargain because they know month to month they are barely going to make it.

Mr. Speaker, we should not be cutting Medicare by \$270 billion. We should also not be cutting student loans by \$10 billion. One of the most